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Citation for published version:
Macallister, J 2017, Teaching for wellbeing: On the importance of creating capabilities in schools. in M Thorburn (ed.), *Wellbeing, Education and Contemporary Schooling.* Routledge, pp. 94-109. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315618593

Digital Object Identifier (DOI):
10.4324/9781315618593

Link:
Link to publication record in Edinburgh Research Explorer

Document Version:
Peer reviewed version

Published In:
Wellbeing, Education and Contemporary Schooling

Publisher Rights Statement:
This is an Accepted Manuscript of a book chapter published by Routledge in Wellbeing, Education and Contemporary Schooling on 23rd August 2017, available online: https://www.routledge.com/Wellbeing-Education-and-Contemporary-Schooling/Thorburn/p/book/9781138668492

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Download date: 04. May. 2023

Chapter Six

Teaching for wellbeing: On the importance of creating capabilities in schools

James MacAllister

Abstract

In this chapter I consider some of the reasons why wellbeing has become a policy priority for schools. I discuss the role of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in promoting wellbeing agendas in nations and states. I note how the OECD mostly seem interested in *compiling statistics on wellbeing*. This is in contrast to Nussbaum, who is not opposed to wellbeing measurement but nonetheless believes the focus should be placed on *creating wellbeing capabilities*. The chapter is pulled together via a consideration of the role of the teacher in creating wellbeing capabilities in schools.

Introduction

Schools across the globe have long tried and often succeeded in contributing to the wellbeing of children and young persons who attend them. However, the last 10 to 15 years have seen a heightened policy focus on education for wellbeing in the United Kingdom and elsewhere (see Chapter Three). As White notes, 'before the millennium, the term 'wellbeing' barely figured in the educational lexicon, a decade later its use is ubiquitous' (White, 2011, p. 12). In this chapter I will consider some of the reasons why this may be so. I will also discuss how teachers in schools might respond to the recent education for wellbeing agenda. I will firstly consider the role of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in promoting wellbeing measurement in nations and states. I note how the work of Amartya Sen, has influenced the OECD's mission to measure wellbeing across the globe. After charting three distinctions Sen makes between agency, being well off and being well, I document the views of Nussbaum, who like Sen, advocates the development of wellbeing capabilities. I observe that the OECD mostly appears interested in *compiling statistics on wellbeing*. This is in contrast to Nussbaum, who is not opposed to wellbeing measurement but nonetheless believes the focus should be placed on *creating wellbeing capabilities for all persons*.

The chapter is thereafter pulled together via a consideration of the role of the teacher in creating wellbeing capabilities in schools. I argue that teachers (and schools) will only be able to help students to 'be well' if both teachers and students are clear about the sort of wellbeing they aspire to achieve. Here, I draw a distinction between schooling for *real* and *pseudo* wellbeing. In the case of real wellbeing, teachers in schools support the creation of diverse wellbeing capabilities in learners. All children and young persons are treated with dignity and encouraged to think about the shape and direction of their own lives with a focus on their long-term wellbeing and that of others. When learner wellbeing is real, it is integral to much, if not all, aspects of school experience. In the case of pseudo wellbeing a more limited perspective of wellbeing is adopted. A narrow focus on exams prevails. Students might be encouraged to reflect upon and gratify their own desires but there is no need for them to show active concern for the wellbeing of others. Three different pedagogies for wellbeing are thereafter delineated and their advantages and disadvantages discussed.

- The *measurement model* where teacher led instruction in examinable bodies of knowledge and skills is regarded as the best way to promote wellbeing.

- The *subjective model* where the curriculum is built up from the current interests and desires of learners and where a premium is placed upon supporting young persons to learn how to satisfy their own subjective wellbeing preferences.
- The *capabilities model,* where teaching for wellbeing is held to be a matter of ensuring that all learners have opportunities to develop the ten central capabilities.

Following Nussbaum, it is argued that if teachers in schools want to promote genuine wellbeing, a balance of different pedagogies will need to be adopted, where the fostering of wellbeing capabilities in all is nonetheless vital.

The rise of wellbeing as an aim of schooling and the role of the OECD

Wellbeing has a certain intuitive appeal as an educational aim, perhaps especially for those who think education should be about more than the testing of examinable knowledge. Parents and teachers after all usually want the children in their worlds to do well in life (de Ruyter, 2015). However, children and young people ultimately need to realise their own wellbeing - their parents and teachers cannot do this for them (de Ruyter, 2015). What parents and teachers can however try to do is create conditions where children and young people are given the best possible chance of flourishing. But if schools can only indirectly pursue wellbeing for children and young people why has wellbeing become more of a priority for schools in recent times? In *Exploring Wellbeing in Schools: a guide to making children's lives more fulfilling*, John White maintains that three developments have brought renewed focus to the educating for wellbeing agenda in the UK: the '*Every Child Matters'* (2003) policy, wellbeing becoming a curriculum aim, the appearance of lessons specifically devoted to improving learner wellbeing. The '*Every Child Matters'* policy initiative placed an imperative upon schools to foster wellbeing in five areas: health, safety, enjoyment and achievement, the ability to make 'positive contributions' and economic wellbeing (White, 2011). Meanwhile pupil wellbeing has become a prominent curriculum aim in England, Scotland and elsewhere, albeit with different points of emphasis in different places (White, 2011, Thorburn, Chapter Three, this volume). White notes how social welfare concerns, curriculum reforms and the positive psychology of Seligman (promoted by the Wellbeing Institute in Cambridge) have all influenced the emergence of specific lessons in wellbeing. White speculates that the popular work on the 'science' of happiness by the economist Richard Layard may also have helped fuel a shift in societal views about what really makes life worth living - a shift from *economic growth* to *wellbeing*.

White's discussion of the factors that have given rise to wellbeing becoming an educational priority is illuminating but it does not take into account the role played by the OECD. Their role merits consideration however, as the OECD have, since the publication of White's book, become a driving force behind the agenda to foster wellbeing in people, regions and countries rather than mere economic prosperity alone. By their own admission 'the OECD has been heavily engaged in international work to advance the statistical agenda on measuring wellbeing' (OECD, 2015, p. 38). The OECD framework for measuring wellbeing was launched in 2011. They hope that the framework will help in the development of 'better policies for better lives'. The framework is highly ambitious and aims to support the collection of a vast amount of statistical data about wellbeing across the globe. The OECD maintain wellbeing needs to be understood as a multi-dimensional concept. Being well they suggest is more than being economically well off. As such, the OECD has identified 11 key indicators of wellbeing that are grouped into two categories, namely: *material conditions* and *quality of life*. The former category includes: income and wealth, jobs and earnings, and housing. The latter includes: health status, work-life balance, education and skills, social

connections, civic engagement and governance, environmental quality, personal security and subjective wellbeing (OECD, 2015, p. 23). The latest evidence on wellbeing suggests that OECD countries have diverse wellbeing strengths and weaknesses.

Predictably however, there are discernible wellbeing inequalities between countries and between populations in different regions of the same country (OECD, 2015). Here, populations ranked in the top third in terms of gross domestic product per capita (GDP) generally score higher in the overall wellbeing indicators than those ranked lower in terms of GDP. However, even countries that score highly on GDP can have weaknesses in terms of job security, air quality, housing affordability and work-life balance (OECD, 2015). Significantly there are large inequalities in child-wellbeing that are likely to persist into adulthood (OECD, 2015). Children from better off families have better health, are less likely to be bullied at school and form better relationships with parents and peers (OECD, 2015). As Cassidy points out in Chapter One systems are now in place to measure the wellbeing of children and not just their performance in exams. The OECD's wellbeing agenda opens up some vital educational questions though. Should schools promote pupil wellbeing as a central aim? If so how might they? If they can how would anyone, including the OECD, really know if they had succeeded in improving wellbeing? Is measuring wellbeing most important or is educating for it? In this chapter I will try to engage with some of these issues. I suggest that teachers should welcome the education for wellbeing policy agenda, but not in an unqualified way.

Main Findings

Sen on capability, being well off, wellbeing and agency

Amartya Sen, the economist and philosopher, has undoubtedly influenced the OECD's mission to measure wellbeing. The OECD suggests that conceptually their framework for measuring wellbeing is partly based upon Sen's capabilities approach to understanding wellbeing (OECD, 2015). Sen first introduced the idea of 'capability' in a 1979 lecture, *Equality of What?* There he argued that the diversity of human capabilities was not fairly taken into account in (then dominant) theories of justice. Sen thus put forward 'capability' as a more egalitarian principle of justice than utility. What was needed he maintained is 'some notion of basic capabilities: a person being able to do certain basic things' (Sen, 1979, p. 218). Sen suggested that equality requires consideration not only of human desire or need but also capability - of what people are actually able to do in their context. In the second of his Dewey lectures five years later, called *Wellbeing, Agency and Freedom,* Sen further remarked that it is useful to distinguish between being 'well off' on the one hand and 'being-well' on the other. The well off person is financially well off. They own riches, assets and other material possessions and have money abundant enough to acquire further riches, assets, goods and possessions. They are as Sen puts it 'opulent' and are likely to have opportunities to enhance their opulence in the future. Wellbeing in contrast is less focused on riches, possessions and wealth. Instead it is more akin to a personal capability – of how able a person is to function well in their life. For Sen (1984) wellbeing occurs when a person does things that contribute to their wellbeing. As such wellbeing is an achievement. However, Sen stresses that wellbeing is also concerned with things a person has not yet achieved but is nonetheless capable of. Some persons have greater capacity for future wellbeing than others and this capacity influences their current wellbeing. Being well off may help a given person to be well, but being well off in no way guarantees personal wellbeing.

While the goods of being well off are in a vital sense external to a person the goods of wellbeing are in a vital sense part of that person. Sen suggests that wellbeing will often by

embodied necessity vary from person to person. He takes the example of the difference between *consumption of food* and *being well-nourished*. One person with high metabolism may be undernourished yet consume much more food than another person who is amply nourished. As wellbeing is experienced (or not) at the personal level, there is undoubtedly a subjective aspect to it. However, for Sen, wellbeing is not essentially about being well off, nor for that matter is wellbeing essentially about subjectively felt happiness, desire or utility. In his later work especially, Sen emphasizes that the essence of wellbeing revolves around human capability (Saito, 2003 & Nussbaum, 2011). However, in his Dewey lectures Sen emphasized that the wellbeing aspect of a person ought to be distinguished from the agency aspect of a person. Indeed, he insisted that people may have desires, goals and values unrelated to wellbeing. He stated that people 'have aspects other than wellbeing…There are goals other than wellbeing and values other than goals' (Sen, 1984, p. 186). While agency freedom is concerned with the freedom a person has to achieve whatever goals they regard as important, wellbeing freedom is always concerned to achieve the particular goal of wellbeing. Wellbeing freedom and doings related to it, are thus much more specific than agency freedom and any doings related to it. Indeed, he suggested that while people may often in their actions and decisions aim at wellbeing sometimes they will not. Being free means being free to act in ways that are contrary to our wellbeing or that of others (Sen, 1984).

Sen makes three key conceptual distinctions in his Dewey lectures then: between being well-off, being well and having agency. For Sen, people are *well off* when they have monetary goods or opportunity to get further monetary goods. In contrast to this they have *wellbeing* when they do act in ways that aid their wellbeing or when they can. They finally have *agency* when they have the freedom to act in ways important to them. However, if his capability concept of wellbeing is to be properly understood, Sen's Dewey lectures need to be viewed in light of his wider critique of traditional welfare economics and utilitarianism. From the 1970's onwards Sen and others such as Nussbaum (2011) sought to highlight the inadequacy of mainstream welfare economics which tended to regard individuals and states as having wellbeing if they had a high GDP. However, for Sen and Nussbaum such traditional *income and commodity* accounts of wellbeing are fundamentally incomplete. For them there is much more to wellbeing than affluence and economic growth alone. Sen points out that a 'person's wellbeing is not really a matter of how rich he or she is' (1985, p. 28). However, utility (understood as satisfaction of desire preferences) based accounts of wellbeing are inadequate too. Sen is skeptical of desire satisfaction and utility based accounts of wellbeing because people can have desires that run contrary to the demands of justice (Saito, 2003). Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) can desire and come to believe that they deserve to paid hundreds of times more than other employees in their company on the one hand while people in poverty can habituate themselves to not desire what they know to be unobtainable on the other. In such circumstances neither the desires of the CEO nor the impoverished person would provide sufficient motivation for actions that aim at just change. Sen thus defends the merits of a capabilities approach as it represents a more socially just way of evaluating human wellbeing. Nussbaum is another well-known advocate of the capabilities approach.

Nussbaum on creating capabilities

> 'What are capabilities? They are the answer to the question, 'What is this person able to do and be?' (Nussbaum, 2011, p. 20)

Like Sen, Nussbaum believes that a capabilities approach to the evaluation of human wellbeing should be endorsed as it provides a more socially just alternative to utility or GDP approaches. Nussbaum indeed defines the capabilities approach as 'an approach to quality of life assessment and to theorizing about social justice' (Nussbaum, 2011, p. 18). For Nussbaum (and for that matter Sen) assessments of wellbeing should specifically seek to tackle entrenched injustice and inequality. Here, the core question to ask when comparing quality of life and justice in different societies becomes not, 'how rich is each person, region or country' or 'how satisfied are different people with their lives' but 'what is each person able to do and be in their life'? Nussbaum's capabilities approach calls for a focus on understanding the overall capabilities each person has opportunity to develop in their context, and not only on their affluence or capacity to satisfy desires. Nussbaum suggests there are three different types of capability; basic, internal and combined. *Combined capabilities* are the sum total of capabilities that each person has developed or has the opportunity to develop. They represent the overall range of possible choices and actions that each person can take in their specific context. In contrast to this, *internal capabilities* are achieved states of persons. They are the specific things that people can do. Here it is worth stressing that the capabilities each person has opportunity to develop or has developed may evolve over time - they are fluid rather than fixed states.

Finally, there are *basic capabilities*. These are the innate faculties of each person that render later development of capability possible. As fluid states, capabilities are educable. However, whether a person will have the freedom to translate their basic capabilities into internal and combined ones depends upon the particular context and time they find themselves in. Sometimes personal, institutional and/or cultural circumstances will greatly restrict opportunities for capability development. Nussbaum takes the example of Vasanti to explain how capabilities might emerge when previously they could not. Vasanti is an Indian woman who lacked many opportunities to develop her capabilities while in an abusive marriage. She was not employed so was financially dependent on her husband who beat her in the knowledge (consciously or otherwise) that she was dependent on him and so less likely to leave him. She was not literate, which in turn affected her employment prospects. However, with the support of her family and a women's organization, Vasanti left her abusive husband and found that opportunities to develop her capabilities increased over time. She became able to set up her own sewing business, and pay back the loan she needed to set up the business. She enrolled on an education programme and she became more socially and politically active in her community. She started to turn her basic capabilities into internal and combined ones. As she did this her wellbeing improved.

Nussbaum insists that there are ten specific central capabilities that political orders must ensure for all citizens if their region or country is to be considered minimally just. These are:

1. *Life*. Being able to live to the end of human life of normal length; not dying prematurely…
2. *Bodily Health.* Being able to have good health…to be adequately nourished, to have adequate shelter
3. *Bodily Integrity.* Being able to move freely from place to place; to be secure against violent assault, including sexual assault and domestic violence; having opportunities for sexual satisfaction and for choice in matters of reproduction.
4. *Senses, imagination, and thought.* Being able to use the senses to imagine, think and reason – and to do these things in a truly human way, a way informed by an

adequate education, including but by no means limited to literacy and basic mathematical and scientific training…

5. *Emotions*. Being able to have attachments to things and people outside ourselves; to love those who love and care for us…to experience longing, gratitude and justified anger. Not having one's emotional development blighted by fear and anxiety.
6. *Practical Reason*. Being able to form a conception of the good and to engage in critical reflection about the planning of one's life.
7. *Affiliation*. (A) Being able to live with and towards others, to recognize and show concern for other human beings, to engage in various forms of social interaction; to be able to imagine the situation of another…(B) being able to be treated as a dignified being whose worth is equal to that of others. This entails provisions of non-discrimination on the basis of race, sex, sexual orientation, ethnicity, caste, national origin.
8. *Other species*. Being able to live with concern for and in relation to animals, plants and the world of nature.
9. *Play*. Being able to laugh, to play, to enjoy recreational activities.
10. *Control over one's environment*. (A) Political. Being able to participate politically in political choices that govern one's life…(B) Material. Being able to hold property…and having property rights on an equal basis with others…In work, being able to work as a human being, exercising practical reason and entering into meaningful relationships of mutual recognition with other workers

(Nussbaum, 2011, p. 33-34)

For Nussbaum full justice will not be delivered if one capability is achieved at the expense of another. Though all ten central capabilities are important then, Nussbaum argues that two are 'architectonic' in that they 'pervade' the rest - *practical reason* and *affiliation*. According to Nussbaum, all persons should be afforded the opportunity to plan and live their lives in freely chosen ways. This capability is one of practical reason, and practical reason is needed in all the other capabilities too. People should be free to plan their leisure for example and they should be able to choose who they socialize with and when. Similarly, if people are not able to form caring relationships with others, and for others, if they are not able to affiliate with others in loving ways, then their capacity to achieve other capabilities will be greatly restricted. In compiling this list Nussbaum wants to raise expectations about what it means to live life well. She especially wants to challenge nations and regions across the globe to take action to support the development of central capabilities for all persons. Here she feels that central capabilities need to be aspirational but not so utopian as to be unrealistic and unfeasible.

In this respect, she concedes that her list is only a proposal whose specific merits can and should be contested and debated and whose specific contents may need to be amended in different regions and countries to take into account prevailing local, cultural and/or religious values, interests and needs. However, she maintains that this list nonetheless represents a minimum threshold of capability entitlements that all citizens across the world should enjoy. This is perhaps the most controversial aspect of her thesis - as Nussbaum is well aware. Nussbaum acknowledges that some may interpret her formulation of universal norms of capability entitlement for all as wanting to impose Western, imperialist values on other countries and regions. However, Nussbaum does not regard these central capabilities as inherently Western. Indeed, she points out that the capabilities approach was in no small part developed by an Indian (Sen), in India. She also points out that the capabilities approach has

close links to the human rights movement, the architects of which came from diverse countries including France, China and Egypt. She also suggests it is not imperialist to call for action that enhances the dignity of each person. Imperialism often hinged on Westerners treating non-Westerners with little or no dignity (Nussbaum, 2011). However, such indignity is precisely what her capabilities approach seeks to challenge. She maintains that if a person is denied the opportunity to develop capabilities in any of these ten areas, then their dignity as a person is not being respected (Nussbaum, 2011). Nussbaum suggests that the importance that she places on human dignity renders her account different to that of Sen's. There are though other important differences between the capabilities approaches endorsed by Sen and Nussbaum, perhaps especially in respect to the issue of measurement.

Measuring and comparing wellbeing capabilities, or creating them?

> 'The earliest and still most common use of the Capabilities Approach is to supply a new account of the right way to compare and rank development achievements. When nations or regions compare with one another for ranking in the global development 'marketplace', trying to show that they offer a better quality of life than other nations do, or than they themselves used to do, the Capabilities Approach provides a new account of the right way to make such comparisons' (Nussbaum, 2011, p. 69)

In *Creating Capabilities: The Human Development Approach* Nussbaum explains how her capabilities approach to human development in places differs to the approach provided by Sen. Nussbaum regards Sen's account as unduly open ended about the minimum capability entitlements all persons should have. Unlike Nussbaum, Sen does not specify a threshold level of capability entitlements that all persons in the world should enjoy. Nussbaum considers Sen to be too permissive in respect to the issue of freedom as well. She is critical of the distinction Sen makes between wellbeing and agency freedom and regards this as a needless remnant of utilitarianism in Sen's essentially non-utilitarian project. She maintains that Sen does not do enough to challenge orthodox, politically powerful views about human freedom. As she puts it: 'some freedoms limit others…The freedom of industry to pollute the environment limits the freedom of citizens to enjoy an unpolluted environment…Sen…says nothing to limit…such conflicts' (Nussbaum, 2011, p. 71). Indeed, it is partly because some choices and actions limit others that Nussbaum insists that none of the ten capabilities that she delineates should be pursued to the expense of others. Nussbaum thus considers her theory to be more *normative* and less *comparative* than Sen's. Like Sen, Nussbaum believes that capability evaluations should inform public policy so that they can 'improve the quality of life for all people as defined by their capabilities' (Nussbaum, 2011, p. 19).

However, for Nussbaum capabilities primarily pertain to individual persons and only derivatively to groups. Nussbaum therefore deliberately refrains from using her capabilities approach to provide comprehensive and comparative assessments of the quality of life for different groups of persons. This is in contrast to Sen who has asserted that capabilities can provide the foundation for a comprehensive, comparative quality of life assessment for groups of persons in nations and regions. For Nussbaum the emphasis should be on *creating* wellbeing capabilities for all –not on *measuring and comparing* them. For Nussbaum (2011) the capabilities approach is not so much a means of measurement for comparison but rather a way of ensuring that minimal social justice capability entitlements are worked towards in practice and enshrined in constitutional law internationally for all citizens. Nussbaum thus implies that while both her and Sen bring moral philosophy into development economics, her

capabilities approach is primarily *normative* whereas Sen's is primarily *comparative*. Nussbaum does like Sen think that measuring capabilities can help to bring about action that creates capabilities. However, she cautions against over-reliance upon statistical measurement when assessing capability. Some capabilities might be best understood through qualitative and narrative research (Nussbaum, 2011). At a more fundamental level she also suggests that measurement is important, but only in so far as it supports the creation of actual wellbeing capabilities. Measurement and comparison of wellbeing capability are not in themselves good. They are only good if they support the creation of actual wellbeing capabilities. In this respect, education is at the core of Nussbaum's approach to creating capabilities.

Education and creating capabilities

> 'At the heart of the Capabilities approach since its inception has been the importance of education. Education…forms peoples existing capacities into developed internal capabilities…This formation is valuable in itself…it is also pivotal to the development of many other human capabilities: a 'fertile functioning' of the highest importance in addressing disadvantage and inequality' (Nussbaum, 2011, p. 152)

Nussbaum argues that people who have received even a basic education greatly enhance their capabilities. They will have higher chances of employment, better options for social and political participation as well as heightened access to leisure opportunities. Nussbaum follows Adam Smith in believing that deprivation of education takes an 'inestimable toll' on the wellbeing of people and on their capacity to achieve things in later life. Indeed, she argues that compulsory schooling in the early years is justified precisely because it will enhance the capabilities of people in adulthood. Here she stresses that it is important not to confine education to the development of literacy, scientific and numeracy skills alone. A good education will be sensitive to the local context and culture of students. Importantly Nussbaum suggests that teachers should pay attention to how both curriculum content and pedagogy can help in the development of central human capabilities. In this respect, Nussbaum questions a current tendency evident in many national school systems: to focus on fostering 'marketable' skills. Such a narrow focus, borne out of short term anxieties for profit, reduces opportunities for the development of critical thinking and engagement with the humanities (Nussbaum, 2011). However, for Nussbaum, education properly conceived will attend to more than economic needs. It will be concerned with human development in its fullness. It should strive to promote social justice within countries and across the globe. Here it is interesting to compare Nussbaum's thinking on education with that encouraged by the OECD. As we have seen, for Nussbaum, education should create diverse capabilities for all. Education is not just about developing marketable skills in young persons' so that the needs of the market economy can be met.

The OECD encourages a rather different view of education - one that appears to be centrally about the development of marketable skills in young people. Countries can after all only become members of the OECD if they are committed to the needs of the market economy (Sellar & Lingard, 2013). Via tools like the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), the OECD have become a key player in promoting the outcome and exam orientated vision of education that is all too common today, in Europe and elsewhere (Sellar & Lingard 2013, Grek 2014). Grek suggests that the OECD is now a 'powerhouse' in education policy terms: a powerhouse that has been only too happy to generate and share data about the

performance of national school systems. Unfortunately, 'because of the OECD, assessing education is often presently simplistically as an empirical problem open to quantification' (Grek, 2014, p. 278). Not everything that is educationally valuable is open to numeric quantification, yet the OECD's measurement of the educational aspect of wellbeing looks like it will be based upon such simplistic assessments. They assert that when evaluating the wellbeing dimension of education, the focus is not on inputs and outputs but on *outcomes* – on skills and competencies achieved by persons in education (OECD, 2015). However, the two indicators that the OECD use to measure the wellbeing aspect of education are the percentage of the adult population (15-64 years) holding at least an upper second class degree and the PISA reading test taken by 15 year olds (OECD, 2011). Quite how these indicators represent *outcomes* rather than *outputs* is not clear. What does seem clear is that the OECD intend on continuing their policy of collecting data on the performance of education systems globally through programmes like PISA. It is positive that more nuanced concepts of wellbeing are beginning to figure in policy discourses (Thorburn, Chapter Three). However, the collection of statistics about educational outcomes will not by itself help in the creation of wellbeing capabilities. Nussbaum's capability framework is notably different to the OECD's then. The OECD only seem interested in collecting statistical data about wellbeing and education. Nussbaum in contrast believes education should focus on the creation of wellbeing capabilities and she insists that some capabilities cannot be properly understood in statistical terms.

Three pedagogies for wellbeing: measurement, subjective or capabilities approaches

My sympathy for Nussbaum's views about wellbeing and education over those perpetuated by the OECD are probably by now clear. However, that does not mean that I regard the OECD's mission of measurement of student and school performance and wider human wellbeing as wholly unhelpful and without warrant. I do think schools should help learners develop marketable skills in literacy, numeracy and science. As Nussbaum points out, even a successful basic education can greatly aid in the development of human capability. Knowing which national and regional school systems might need support to provide such basic education better would seem important from a social justice point of view. However, as Nussbaum also points out, there is more to education than developing marketable skills in the same way that there is more to human wellbeing than GDP alone. How might teachers in schools support learners to be well then? It is my view that teachers (and schools) will only be able to help learners to 'be well' if both teachers and students are clear about the sort of wellbeing they aspire to achieve. Here, I think we can draw a distinction between schooling for *real* and *pseudo* wellbeing. In the case of real wellbeing, teachers in schools focus on supporting students to develop diverse capabilities. In the case of real wellbeing children and young persons are treated with dignity and encouraged to think about the shape and direction of their own lives with a focus on their long-term wellbeing and that of others. When learner wellbeing is real, it is integral to much, if not all, aspects of school experience.

In the case of pseudo wellbeing, a more limited perspective of wellbeing is adopted. Wellbeing is held to be an add-on to and by product of examination success. However, a focus on exams in schools in this way may do little other than provide information for wellbeing indexes such as those developed by the OECD. Students with pseudo wellbeing might be encouraged to reflect upon and gratify their own desires but there is no need to show active concern for the wellbeing of others. Nor are they supported to develop what Nussbaum calls practical reason – the capacity to reflectively shape the direction of one's life with an eye on the common good. I do not think there is a specific formula that teachers can adopt in order to promote real wellbeing in schools. I do nonetheless think it is important that

teachers reflect upon how their activities can support the development of genuine rather than pseudo student wellbeing. At the moment a *measurement model* arguably prevails in education policy and, as a consequence, in many schools. Here, teacher led instruction in examinable bodies of knowledge and skills is regarded as the best way to promote wellbeing. However, the problem with this model is that it encourages a narrow fixation on test scores and outcomes. How might teachers challenge such tendencies in practice? One possibility might be for them to aim to instill a love of learning in all students during their schooling. For if students do often find themselves immersed in their school experiences they may be more likely to develop and sustain a capacity to learn throughout the length of life. A positive disposition toward learning can after all greatly aid long term wellbeing. No doubt many teachers already try to inspire their students and not just prepare them for exams. However, the more recent policy tendency to value examinable knowledge most highly perhaps encourages teachers to neglect the need for schooling to be an absorbing, whole-hearted affair that encourages students to love learning. Of course most teachers know all too well that knowledge and skills are not just valuable on account of the enhanced employment prospects that they may offer when packaged up in a qualification.

Knowledge can also illuminate and enrich the human predicament beyond the workplace. There is also more to education than the acquisition of knowledge or the desire for it though. Another way in which schools might help young persons to be well is by helping them to learn how to satisfy their own interests and desires. This might be called a *subjective model* of teaching for wellbeing. Here, the curriculum is built up from the current interests and desires of learners. A premium is placed upon supporting young persons to learn how to satisfy their own subjective wellbeing preferences. An advantage of this model is that it encourages young people to go after what they want in life and reflect upon their desires and values. John White is perhaps the most well-known exponent of such a subjective theory of wellbeing and schooling. White suggests that schools should centrally aim to promote the wellbeing of students. Learners are well, he suggests, when they are able to pursue activities that they regard as worthwhile, in a whole-hearted way, and when they allow others to do the same (White, 2011). White has though been criticized for endorsing an unduly desire focused story about education and wellbeing (Marples, 1999). However, White (1999) insists this mud does not stick to his later work, where he emphasizes that people learn to desire and value what they do through social interactions with others. de Ruyter (2015) is probably therefore right to suggest that White's account of wellbeing and schooling contains aspects of objectivity, and is *intersubjective* rather than subjective in nature. This is an important distinction as in purely subjective theories of wellbeing, young people may not learn to care about the needs and interests of others or wider societal injustices. In *subjective* accounts of wellbeing, persons are well when they feel content with their lives. They feel that they have fulfilled their desires - but this might just mean desiring to be well-off and feeling satisfied when they become well off. In contrast to this, in *objective* theories (such as that developed by Nussbaum) persons are well when they are able to develop their natural capabilities, when they are able to attain goods that are in some crucial way identifiably good for all people (de Ruyter, 2015).[1]

[1] Kristjánsson (2016) offers a slightly different description of the differences between subjective and objective accounts of wellbeing, one that can perhaps shed light on how the OECD (2015) understands wellbeing. He suggests that in a *subjective* account the criteria used to assess wellbeing are restricted to self-reports on psychological states experienced by the agent whose wellbeing is being evaluated. In contrast to this, the criteria used to assess *objective* wellbeing have to do with objective features of the agent's life - things that are external to the agent but relate to how they do or are able to live their life. Here, the feelings an agent has about their wellbeing need not come into it.

de Ruyter speculates that there are similarities between White's views and Nussbaum's. This may be so as they do both defend the value of liberal education while considering certain basic needs like food, shelter and safety to be necessary for human wellbeing. However, *capabilities* are to the fore in Nussbaum's framework rather than *desires*. In a *capabilities model,* teaching for wellbeing is a matter of ensuring that all young persons have opportunity to develop ten central capabilities Teaching to develop diverse wellbeing capabilities is much more than teaching to the test. Teachers committed to a capabilities approach will need to help students learn how to affiliate with each other in caring ways. They will need to give all students room to think about long term life goals and not just the satisfaction of short term desires. Teaching to create capabilities will almost certainly mean different things in different places however. In some regions of the world educators might be first and foremost concerned to ensure that learners get access to a basic education. In many regions a key task facing teachers committed to a capabilities approach will be to help young persons' learn how to actively care more about the demands of justice than the needs of the market economy. The enormity of the challenge to create central capabilities for all should not be underestimated. It is easy to mouth such words of aspiration - it is another to live them in practice in our increasingly globalized market society. As MacIntyre (2013) has observed, today young people are generally habituated into desiring what the market economy needs them to desire - they are schooled with concern for the common good minimally, if at all. Thus teachers committed to fostering real wellbeing in students might need to spend a good deal of time asking learners if the needs of the market economy really should have such influence over human desires and actions. Fairly obviously schools will not be able to tackle such wellbeing challenges alone. However, aiming to create diverse student capabilities at school, and encouraging students to take an active concern for the basic wellbeing entitlements of others might represent one way in which teachers can challenge entrenched injustices while also supporting the children in their care to be well.

Future directions

In this chapter I have considered the role of the OECD in the agenda to promote wellbeing as an aim of schooling. I have also considered in depth the work of Sen and Nussbaum on the capabilities approach. I have suggested that the capabilities approach to human wellbeing advanced by Nussbaum has several advantages over the multi-faceted model favoured by the OECD. The stress from the OECD is on *measuring and comparing* wellbeing competences of groups of persons where such competences are generally measured by statistics alone. This is in contrast to Nussbaum, who is not opposed to wellbeing measurement but nonetheless believes the focus should be placed on *creating wellbeing capabilities for all persons*. Here Nussbaum suggests that some human capabilities are best understood through qualitative and narrative research rather than statistics and numbers. Given the OECD seem thoroughly committed to collecting statistics about wellbeing, there is arguably a real need for research on wellbeing and education that employs narrative and qualitative methodologies. Such research could compliment the statistical work being conducted by the OECD. However, there is also a need for further research that critically interrogates the role of the OECD in measuring wellbeing. I have tried to contribute to this research need in this chapter. In this chapter I have also suggested that teachers need to do more than promote pseudo wellbeing in schools. There is more to educating for wellbeing than fostering marketable skills in the same way that there is more to human wellbeing than being well-off.

This is not to say there should be no measurement in schools, or of schools, or no fostering of marketable skills in schools. Of course there should. However, if teachers want to promote genuine rather than pseudo-wellbeing, a balance of different pedagogies will need to be adopted, where the fostering of wellbeing capabilities in all is nonetheless vital. In this respect there is arguably an urgent need for narrative and qualitative research about how schools are trying to create wellbeing capabilities in learners and about the sorts of wellbeing capabilities they are creating. As schools are now expected to promote wellbeing, it only seems fair to conclude by asking if at least some of the time and money being expended on measuring wellbeing, would be better spent on creating student capabilities in schools. If the lion's share of time and funding goes on measuring wellbeing rather than creating wellbeing capabilities, this might be a concrete indicator of how serious the OECD (and those they influence) really is about creating better policies for better lives. How much more statistical data on wellbeing needs to be collected before action for real change is taken? In my view it is not so much *data* about wellbeing injustices that is lacking but a *will* for real change on the part of the powerful. In some instances, the obsessive gathering of wellbeing statistics on a large scale might even serve as a smokescreen for inaction - inaction which ill-serves those most dispossessed of wellbeing. Whether well intended or not, measuring wellbeing is no substitute for developing it.

Summary of key points

- There is more to educating for wellbeing than fostering marketable skills - in the same way that there is more to human wellbeing than being well-off.
- The OECD mostly seems interested in *compiling statistics on wellbeing.*
- Nussbaum believes focus should be placed on *creating wellbeing capabilities for all persons*. Education is at the core of this.
- Teachers should reflect upon how their activities can support the development of *real* rather than *pseudo* student wellbeing.
- There is a need for further research on wellbeing and education that employs narrative and qualitative methodologies.

Reflective Tasks

- Compare the ten central capabilities of Nussbaum with the eleven wellbeing measurements favoured by the OECD? What are the strengths and weaknesses of each list? Which list is more overtly committed to the promotion of social justice? Are any aspects of wellbeing especially important for you? Why?
- What do you think the difference between an objective and subjective account of schooling for wellbeing is? What pedagogy for wellbeing do you think is most *educational* and why?
- Imagine you are a class teacher committed to wellbeing. How would this be evident in your classroom practices? Give precise examples? Provide further examples of how wellbeing might feature in your discussions about school priorities with a range of professional colleagues?

Key Texts

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